

**KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 4, 2006**

**STATE BOARD ROOM
1ST FLOOR, CAPITAL PLAZA TOWER
FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY**

SUMMARY MINUTES

The Kentucky Board of Education held its regular meeting on January 4, 2006, in the State Board Room, First Floor, Capital Plaza Tower, Frankfort, Kentucky. The Board conducted the following business:

Wednesday, January 4, 2006

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Keith Travis called the Board meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present for the meeting were Janice Allen, Dorie Combs, Bonnie Lash Freeman, Tom Layzell, Jeff Mando, Helen Mountjoy, Hilma Prather, David Rhodes, David Tachau, Keith Travis, Janna Vice and David Webb.

CONSIDERATION OF 704 KAR 3:305, MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Chair Keith Travis asked Commissioner Wilhoit to lead the Board through the discussion on the minimum requirements for high school graduation.

The commissioner made the following comments about this issue:

- The Board needs to step back and look at the big picture on this issue and realize historically in the early years many states took a minimal role in setting graduation requirements.
- In the 1980s and 1990s, states began to take a more direct role and court rulings clearly indicated that it is the state's responsibility to provide an equitable education.
- The question the Board needs to answer is what it will do with the responsibility set up by the courts.

- The chart in Appendix A can be used to set the context for the graduation requirements.
- All that requirements can do is to say to local districts that these are the minimum requirements needed to graduate and traditionally this has been done through Carnegie units. However, in this most recent discussion, we have moved to a new conversation of defining results as standards so that the requirements are set with both content and standards.
- If the only thing done was to set high school graduation requirements, no matter how good these are, it would be inadequate. Other elements such as the Program of Studies, core content and what is to be assessed must be added.
- We must be clear what we mean at each stage to the field and the more we can provide clarity the better. However, an essential additional ingredient must be instructional support.
- End-of-course assessments will be another tool put in place to validate instruction and measure progress incrementally. These assessments for Geometry, Algebra I and Algebra II will be available by the end of the year and language arts will follow.
- All of the elements mentioned above are part of a total system we are talking about and the total weight cannot be put just on high school graduation requirements.
- The high school graduation requirements will provide more definitive guidance for local school districts and we must rely on districts to carry out these requirements. The districts have the ultimate responsibility to provide an education to every student and they have the responsibility to refine the minimum requirements, set local standards and grades, policies, etc.
- Some schools have been very successful and flourished under this system, but we have also seen some schools not progressing. Other elements of policy are brought in to deal with these situations. A chart is being handed out to Board members showing the strategies that will be used in schools that are not doing well, including revising comprehensive plans, audit/reviews, highly skilled educators and then the new direct state intervention process.
- There will be adjustments to the system when the graduation requirements change and we will be saying that these requirements are those absolutely needed to go onto postsecondary or the world of work. We are not saying this is all, but these are the minimum requirements. Setting this level of expectation puts pressure on the system and will point out weaknesses in the system.

Hilma Prather commented that when she looked at Appendix A, it did comfort her to see so many other points of improvement than just the high school graduation requirements. She said she realized there are many other resources available to schools to support these requirements.

Jeff Mando said that he appreciated the clarification on the context of the requirements within the system. His one concern was that the interventions and support be available before the 2012 date for students to whom these requirements will not apply.

Commissioner Wilhoit replied that many districts may put these in place before the required date and he applauded the efforts of those superintendents already communicating about these to their constituencies.

Helen Mountjoy thought it was good to have gone over these points because there seems to be a feeling out in the state that the graduation requirements are an end-all, be-all. She clarified that these are beginning elements and suggested that staff develop a timeline for districts to help them move toward implementation of the new graduation requirements.

Commissioner Wilhoit went on to talk about the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) as an element found in Appendix A and reminded the Board that it has been in place for several years. He made the following additional points about the (IGP):

- The IGP has not been developed/implemented to the degree it should and staff realizes it needs to start in middle school.
- In many schools the students look at and sign it once a year.
- Staff has reexamined the IGP for elements that could be improved and realizes that the needs of students cannot be met without personal conversations with the students on where they have been and where they are going. Also, parents need to be involved in the conversations.
- The current organization of the system and attitudes inhibit this personal kind of approach and teachers must realize the purpose of the IGP is to guide students.
- Staff will be asking the Board in the next few months for ways to require elements of the IGP.
- Some tools must be in place to send strong messages to schools that attention needs to be paid to each student.
- The ability to have constant monitoring and adjustment needs to occur or some students will fail.

- Staff felt that the old paper/pencil tool is outdated and thus the Department has contracted with a vendor to make the IGP electronic, which is currently being piloted in Kenton County.
- Linda Pittenger was then asked to do a short demonstration of the new electronic IGP and answered questions throughout the demonstration.

Comments made about the IGP were as follows:

- The electronic version needs to make sure it accommodates students who would seek jobs not requiring college preparation.
- It is thrilling to see collaboration between the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority and the Department.
- We need to move toward compatibility with the higher education data system.
- Student input needs to be sought as to the content of this new electronic IGP. It is a wonderful tool, but the Department does not need to lose sight that the relationship needed with each student is what is most important.
- The Kenton County pilot should be a way of working out some of the issues that have been raised. It was suggested that the Family Resource/Youth Services Centers could assist with the parental involvement component. Hearing from the pilot in Kenton County would be a good presentation for the Board to hear in the near future.

Dr. Tom Layzell stated that he strongly supports what the Department is doing with the IGP. He went on to say that it will take a lot to make the tool effective including more joint budget discussions between the three educational agencies. Layzell reported that higher education institutions are not yet ready for the individual student identifiers.

Commissioner Wilhoit summarized that he had laid out a vision for the IGP that will put pressure on the postsecondary system. He emphasized that it is not just about college going but whatever career the student is planning.

After a short break, Chair Travis asked the Board to move on directly to the staff note dealing with the minimum requirements for high school graduation. He noted that Deputy Commissioner Kevin Noland reported that the Board can either approve the regulation today or in February because this will not affect the actual implementation date of the regulation. He then stated that the Board will proceed through each of the issues noted in the staff note.

Commissioner Wilhoit asked that Board members use Appendix B to go through the issues cited in the staff note one at a time instead of jumping around.

Issue #1 - Implementation: When should the proposed minimum high school graduation requirements become effective?

The first issue introduced by the commissioner was when the proposed minimum high school graduation requirements should become effective. He stated that the Department is recommending 2012 in order to allow a phased-in approach to occur through middle school. He said his sense is that many changes will occur before the 2012 date.

David Rhodes then inquired whether the math every year requirement could start next year for incoming freshman.

The commissioner replied that he did not think the Board would need to go ahead and mandate this early because many school districts will go ahead on their own and implement it. He felt that the timeline gives districts the opportunity to wrestle with the new requirement.

Hilma Prather thought the biggest reason not to implement this requirement early was the capacity issue because it affects scheduling and mathematics is a shortage area. She recommended that schools have lead time to prepare for this change.

Dorie Combs commented that at the P-16 meeting what happens to the teacher supply when these requirements are implemented was discussed.

Education Professional Standards Board Director Phil Rogers replied that when a market is created, one tends to see people going into that field.

David Webb expressed concern that he was not sure schools were geared up to implement the math requirement right away. He then asked if the number of graduates in mathematics could be secured and reported to the Board.

Commissioner Wilhoit responded that the data exists and said Phil Rogers would get it and report back to the Board. He also noted increases in the number of alternative certifications in math and science are being seen.

Jeff Mando commented that he supports the recommendation of staff for the 2012 implementation but voiced his concern that students not affected by this implementation date might get lost in the shuffle. He emphasized that it is critical to communicate in a loud voice that those graduation classes not affected by these new requirements get the resources/supports they need.

Hilma Prather suggested that a message go out that the Consolidated School Improvement Plan must show the transition of each district toward meeting these new requirements.

Helen Mountjoy expressed concerns about rural schools that might have difficulty in meeting the new requirement and wanted attention paid to those areas with shortages of teachers. She noted that other options must be looked at for offering certain new

requirements to assist these schools. At this point, Mountjoy moved approval of staff's recommendation for an implementation date of 2012 and Hilma Prather seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Chair Travis then recognized Dorie Combs to share the P-16 Council's recommendations on high school graduation requirements.

Ms. Combs indicated there was a great deal of interest from the P-16 Council membership and said the motion found in the letter received by the Kentucky Board of Education from the Council was approved unanimously. She indicated that she wanted the Board to know the Council's position as it considers the approach that will be taken.

Issue #2 - Mathematics: What mathematics should be required?; Should students be able to opt-out of Algebra II?

Commissioner Wilhoit then moved on to the second issue of the mathematics requirements that should be put in place. He made the following comments:

- This area is probably the point of major concern in the requirements.
- Many say that we must increase mathematics competence and the remediation rates for college support this statement.
- Others say increasing the mathematics requirements is more than students are capable of doing. This could be a point of agreement in that students are not currently doing the proposed requirements.
- The Board is put in a tough position on this issue.
- Department staff looked at a number of options and recommends beginning the awarding of credit with Algebra I.
- The Southern Regional Education Board reports the 16 states in this region are traditionally low-performing in mathematics and it has set the goal of increased mathematics competency beginning in middle school.
- Not much comment has been made on Geometry but Algebra II seems to be the major issue.
- Staff looked at entrance requirements for college and found that the college success rate is higher for those who have had Algebra II.
- Remediation rates of 70%+ at community colleges are unacceptable; thus, staff is holding on to its recommendation to require Algebra II. This is consistent with national trends.
- Staff is making the recommendation with some caveats. This is not the traditional course seen today; we must offer the same content through different delivery systems. A major redesign of mathematics delivery in high schools must occur.
- Staff also looked at whether an opt-out option should be offered and does not want it looked at as a way to short-circuit the required, rigorous curriculum.
- The conclusion was that an opt-out option should be available once the opportunity to learn the content has not been successful and the criteria must be agreed on by all parties.
- The opt-out would not be intended for many students and can be a dangerous policy because it requires a judgment call.

The following comments came from Board members on the mathematics issue:

- Some form of monitoring would be needed if an opt-out option was implemented.
- Perhaps we are being presumptuous at requiring Algebra II when not all Algebra I courses are consistent.
- Higher education must play a key role in producing the needed teachers.
- The effect on dropouts must be considered.
- Requiring four years of mathematics and Algebra II are supportable concepts. However, the opt-out option sets a different standard that is not needed. For special education students, IEPs certainly can take precedent. We need to think about different ways of teaching the same standards. The timeline gives six years for this to be fully implemented and it is doable. Algebra II needs to be taught to all students in order to assist them to think conceptually, problem solve and analyze.
- If there is only a small percentage of students that cannot take Algebra II successfully, this would also apply to other subject areas and not just math.
- Lots of correspondence came from folks concerned about dealing with students with disabilities and the Department must provide models and assistance.
- School systems have traditionally sorted students in the past and cannot do this anymore. It seems that some are saying all children can learn except for Algebra II and world language. We must take a leap of faith to push schools to do this.
- Comments were made by several members in favor of the Algebra II requirement but with opposition to the opt-out option.

At this point, Jeff Mando moved inclusion of the Algebra II requirement and deletion of the opt-out language in the regulation as currently recommended by staff. Helen Mountjoy seconded the motion. The motion carried 6 to 5 with David Rhodes, David Tachau, Keith Travis, Janna Vice and David Webb voting no.

Next, Hilma Prather moved to add language to the regulation to indicate that an integrated, applied, interdisciplinary or technical/occupational course that prepares a student for a career path based on the student's individual graduation plan may be substituted for a traditional Algebra II course on an individual student basis if it meets the same standards as defined in the Program of Studies. Dorie Combs seconded the motion and it passed by a vote of 9 to 2 with Keith Travis and David Webb voting no.

The final motion relative to mathematics was made by David Webb and stated to retain staff's recommendation of requiring math every year. Helen Mountjoy seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Issue #3 - English/Language Arts: Should the minimum requirements for English/Language Arts include specific courses?

Commissioner Wilhoit noted that the Department's recommendation had changed to reference the specific courses of English I, II, III and IV but said a required sequence for this course content is not being recommended. He stated that requiring the courses to be

taken in sequence could have a couple of negative effects including if a student is struggling in one and is not successful, this could stimulate dropping out if he/she falls behind. Also, Wilhoit indicated that by not requiring them in sequence, staff hopes to promote some integrated programs that are not currently available.

Then, David Rhodes moved to remove the sequence requirement from Language Arts and Bonnie Lash Freeman seconded the motion.

Helen Mountjoy raised the question of why analysis and conventions were left out of the strands on page 2, line 22 of the regulation.

Associate Commissioner Starr Lewis replied that staff considers writing to contain conventions and analysis.

Mountjoy went on to say that for students who may be unsuccessful in a Language Arts course, individual learning must be examined.

The question was called and the motion carried.

Issue #4 - Social Studies: Should the minimum high school graduation requirements include a specific course for U.S. History?

David Rhodes moved to adopt staff's recommendation of adding language to clarify that the content of U.S. History continues to be an important component of social studies and Janna Vice seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Issue #5 - Physical Education & Health: Should the KBE increase the amount of physical education and health required during high school?

Commissioner Wilhoit stated that we must get to a point where students monitor their own behavior and emphasized that he was not sure schools could impact this area significantly even if the requirements were doubled. He said there are too many complex issues and recommended leaving the requirements at the current level.

David Tachau commented that he was not prepared to override the recommendation but pointed out he did not accept the premise that students should have internalized good habits for their own well-being.

The commissioner responded that there are other ways to deal with these issues and stated some discussion has occurred about having an individualized health plan.

At this point, Jeff Mando moved to accept staff's recommendation of leaving the requirements at the current level and David Tachau seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Issue #6- World Language: Should Kentucky students be expected to demonstrate competency in a world language?

Commissioner Wilhoit indicated that since the last conversation on this topic with the Board, staff has gone back and set a course to develop a plan with partners to ensure the opportunity to learn a world language is in place by 2012 with the goal that all students be able to demonstrate competency in a world language at the basic user level by 2016. Wilhoit emphasized that a lot of development work must occur.

Dr. Phil Rogers of the Education Professional Standards Board indicated that Kentucky is currently not producing enough teachers in world languages; however, he noted that the capacity for training more teachers exists. Rogers reported that over the last three years 159 had been admitted to programs in world languages with Spanish being the largest portion. He said that 85 came through alternative certification. Dr. Rogers shared that he and the commissioner have discussed ways to increase these numbers such as endorsements.

Then, Dorie Combs moved to accept the recommendation from staff to develop the capacity for the opportunity to learn by 2012 and move toward the goal of students demonstrating competency by 2016. David Rhodes seconded the motion.

Hilma Prather suggested that the other partners go to their boards and ask them to adopt this approach.

The question was called and the motion carried.

Miscellaneous

David Tachau pointed out that he was told during the break that the Individual Education Plan (IEP) trumps the graduation requirements and provides flexibility for those students. However, he noted there to be confusion on this matter and asked that staff provide clarification on the issue at the February meeting.

Chair Travis asked if there were any other items of which staff needed to be aware as the regulation comes back for final approval at the February meeting. The following were raised:

- Consider changing references to the Individual Graduation Plan to Individual Learning Plan, since this is now the term that will be used.
- Consider adding analysis and conventions to the strands listed under Language Arts.
- Within social studies, consider changing culture to world culture.

CONSIDERATION OF 704 KAR 3:340, COMMONWEALTH DIPLOMA

Division Director Michael Miller came forward to go through the issues relative to 704 KAR 3:340, Commonwealth Diploma. He used the chart attached to the staff note labeled Attachment A to go through the issues. They were as follows:

Issue #1 - Required ACT/SAT score for the Commonwealth Diploma Award

Miller reported that staff did research through Kentucky postsecondary requirements for scholarships and feels that 26 or higher is still an appropriate ACT score and 1200 or higher is an appropriate SAT score for the program.

Janna Vice then asked what percent of students score at 26 or higher and also what percent score proficient on CATS. She thought it was a question of whether 26 on ACT equates to proficient on CATS.

Michael Miller replied that around 16% score 26 or higher on ACT and said he would have to get back to Ms. Vice on the data relative to those scoring proficient on CATS.

Hilma Prather thought a score of 26 was too exclusionary. David Rhodes shared her concern and said the bar may be set too high for the ACT.

David Tachau expressed that the Board had discussed having one diploma and not adding multiple layers. However, he said this program adds an additional layer and is inconsistent with the previous conversation.

Chair Travis asked to come back to this issue once the data on CATS was available.

Issue #2 - Requiring a specific course grade in AP course work

Helen Mountjoy emphasized that when the Kentucky Education Excellence Scholarship (KEES) came about, grade inflation resulted and she thought setting a "B" or better as the grade requirement could result in the same thing.

Commissioner Wilhoit stated that if one wanted to go to a standard, the grade requirement would come out totally.

Hilma Prather thought having the grade requirement was too hard and fast, providing no latitude.

At this point, Janice Allen moved to delete the grade requirement for an AP class and David Tachau seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Janna Vice then moved to restore the "C" or better requirement and Helen Mountjoy seconded the motion. The motion carried with Bonnie Lash Freeman voting no.

Issue #3 - Requiring a passing AP/IB exam score to earn a Commonwealth Diploma award

The question was raised as to why this separate diploma was created. Michael Miller replied that the program was created in the 1980s to provide the incentive for students to take AP courses.

Commissioner Wilhoit commented that staff could rethink the issue and come back in February with a different recommendation not pursue the program any longer if that is the direction the Board desires.

Helen Mountjoy said that the Board has considered trying to fix the program about every three to five years with no success.

Jeff Mando pointed out that he still wants to encourage districts to offer high level courses. However, due to no clear consensus on the regulation, Mando moved to table 704 KAR 3:340 until further analysis could be done and then come back to the Board with possible different recommendations. Dorie Combs seconded the motion and it carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 2:35 p.m., David Tachau moved to adjourn and Bonnie Lash Freeman seconded the motion. The motion carried.